REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to eliminate the brackets and to clarify that esculetin or its derivatives are claimed. The amendment is supported, for example, at page 1, first full paragraph, and page 6, first full paragraph. Claims 9 and 10 have been amended and new claims 11-24 have been added to avoid multiple dependency and thereby reduce the filing fee. New claims 11-17 are supported, for example, by original claim 9. New claims 18-24 are supported, for example, by original claim 10. No new matter has been introduced. The claim amendments are shown on the enclosed "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

If any additional fees are due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 501032.

Respectfully submitted,

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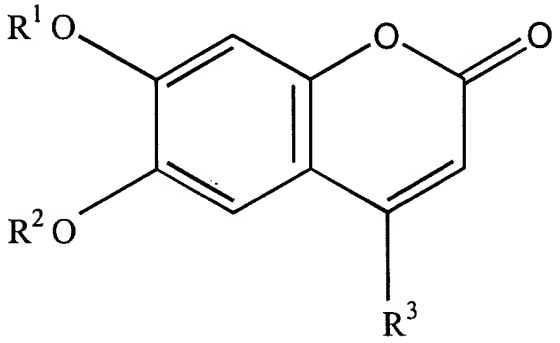
Enclosure: "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made"

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

Claims 1, and 9-10 are amended as follows:

1. A controlled-release oral preparation comprising esculetin, or its derivative shown by the formula (I),



(I)

[[ ] wherein R^1 and R^2 are individually a hydrogen atom or a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic acyl group having 2-25 carbon atoms or benzoyl group, and R^3 is a hydrogen atom, hydroxyl group, alkyl group, aryl group, or aralkyl group[ ]], or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as an effective component.

9. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to [any one of claims 1-8] claim 1, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the

preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

10. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to [any one of claims 1-8] claim 1, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

New claims 11-24 are added.